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SUBJECT: EMBASSY HEARS MISSEIRIYA SIDE OF THE ABYEI SITUATION

¶1. SUMMARY: On June 23 and 24, two large groups of Abyei's Arab Misseriya leadership in Khartoum met CDA Fernandez at the Embassy. Both groups warmly praised Embassy's initiative for this outreach and inviting them to the U.S. Embassy, but ticked-off a list of many complaints including: alleged U.S. bias in favor of the Dinka Ngok; the inequitable distribution of U.S. aid to south Sudan; and the U.S.'s role in drafting the Abyei protocol and ABC report. Despite these complaints, both groups encouraged the U.S. to play an important role through hosting reconciliation talks between the Dinka Ngok and Misseriya and increasing development assistance that crosses ethnic lines. END SUMMARY

INTELLECTUALS

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¶2. On June 23, a group of Arab Misseriya intellectuals met with CDA Fernandez at the U.S. Embassy. The first speaker and leader of the group, Dr. Hassan Mohamed Hamad, read a prepared paper (text attached in para 11.) Dr. Abu Al Gasim Gor followed Hamad, calling for a U.S.-sponsored conflict-resolution conference between the intellectuals of the two tribes. Gor asserted, as other Misseriya have in the past, that the conflict is not between Misseriya and Dinka, but has come "from above." He mentioned that there are more than 3000 Dinka among the IDPs that fled from Abyei to the largely Misseriya town of Muglad. Gor said that they are welcome for now but not forever. Gor also alleged a lack of USAID assistance to the Misseriya area, to which the CDA and AIDoff replied that the USG has many ongoing and planned humanitarian and development projects for the Misseriya. CDA stated that one such project, an electrification project in Abyei which would have benefited both the Dinka Ngok and Misseriya, was intentionally targeted and destroyed last month in Abyei when it was under SAF control. AIDoff noted that, whatever the facts, it is widely believed that it was vandalized by Misseriya militia. CDA Fernandez also stated that the Misseriya will suffer from this vandalism, as they could have been the next recipients of similar efforts, but now the international community will focus on rebuilding Abyei.

¶3. Nimir Babo Nimir thanked the CDA for his frankness, but strongly criticized the Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) report, alleging that the U.S. is responsible for the document and that it is one of the reasons for Abyei's current problems. He stated that the U.S. should play a role in solving the crisis although it has been biased towards the Dinka Ngok in the past, he asserted, in particular because the U.S. and Dinka share a common religion.

¶4. Dr. Mohamed Farah Jibreel stated that Abyei has suffered more from 2005-2007 than it did during the years of outright war between the North and the South. He said that this so-called period of peace has been devastating to Abyei. He said that the U.S. as a superpower has not played a positive role in the conflict, especially through issuing the ABC report and favoring the Dinka Ngok over the Misseriya. According to Jibreel, these two things have created a sense of injustice and inequality which has led the Misseriya to violence. He stated that the U.S. acknowledged that Abyei is a national problem and if the U.S.'s biased policies continue it will create hatred towards the USA. Abdallah concluded

that in order to encourage the co-existence in the area, the U.S. should support joint development projects to strengthen the relations of the two tribes.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

15. Misseriya community leaders echoed many similar concerns on June 24. Former parliamentarian Al Khair Al Faheem El-Mekki opened stating the Abyei Protocol is a product of U.S. Senator (and former Special Envoy for Sudan) John Danforth. He added that this document and the Abyei Road Map were drafted without the participation of the people indigenous to Abyei. "We have been living with the Dinka for more than 233 years, and we are looking for a just and courageous initiative from the U.S. to solve the issue and avoid confrontation," stated Mekki. Mekki said that there should be a U.S. led initiative to support the Roadmap, although "America and the international community are biased against the Misseriya and their media portrays us as killers of Dinka and as some sort of janjaweed."

16. Hassan Subahi repeated Mekki's concerns, adding that he has little faith in the Abyei Roadmap, as the local communities were neglected in the agreement and problems will come with its implementation. According to Subahi, the U.S. officials view the Misseriya as a militia or Islamic movement. CDA Fernandez agreed that U.S. media and some groups in Washington have a distorted view of the Misseriya, but that U.S. presence in Sudan has a more nuanced and complex understanding. Subahi closed his remarks asking, "What can we do to attract the U.S. to solve our problem?"

17. El-Sadiq Babo Nimir charged that the U.S. has been biased historically in favor of the Dinka, as U.S. officials relied only on

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the views of US-based Dinka intellectual Dr. Francis Deng. Nimir also stated that the Abyei Road Map "is not the solution," as transparent arbitration is needed. Nimir stated that if Abyei is not quickly solved "the CPA will collapse." Nimir stated that the Misseriya need more development and assistance, particularly in Muglad. Omda Mohamed Hamad Abdelgalil agreed with Nimir, saying that the Misseriya have been marginalized and ignored, and are willing to live peacefully and in co-existence with the Dinka Ngok.

18. Rahma Abdel Rahman El-Nour, the Misseriya Omda of Abyei, said that since 2005 the situation in Abyei has deteriorated. He claimed that in 2005 he was arrested and tortured by the SPLA. He too asserted that most of the international assistance goes to Dinka areas and that the U.S. has a distorted view of the Misseriya. Abdel Rahman Hassan Omer (ex-commissioner of Abyei) and Al-Nazeer Gibriel al Goni both added that there is the possibility for real co-existence between the Dinka Ngok and Misseriya. They called for U.S. sponsored conference to discuss this issue, as "Abyei has become a political issue instigated by the NCP and SPLM without considering the negative impacts on the two tribes." They noted that Misseriya just want prosperity, peace and stability to herd their cattle, they are less politicized than Americans think.

19. The leaders made clear that the various Abyei accords did not have tribal buy-in and that the National Congress Party does not speak for them (even though a Misseriya signed the June 8 accord for the NCP). CDA Fernandez warned the tribal leaders about NCP agents provocateurs in their midst, specifically mentioning a public complaint he had heard in Muglad in April about GONU State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Haroun providing arms and money for Misseriya militias to sow further violence and turmoil in the region. He also noted that the U.S. sees the Abyei agreements within the context of our concerns about unkept agreements and broken promises by the National Congress Party in Darfur and on the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. He cautioned them about "being contaminated" by being seen as "puppets in the pocket of the NCP" doing their dirty work in Abyei.

COMMENT

10. Many of the remarks by the Misseriya leaders show the gap in perception and the Misseriya's acute feeling of vulnerability and

the sense of victimization. For example, the assertion that the ABC report is an American product and is the cause of Abyei's current problems is a misperception that needs to be corrected. Both the 2004 Abyei Protocol and the June 8, 2008 roadmap are Sudanese agreements, signed by both the National Congress Party and the SPLM. Regardless of their complaints, over twenty leaders of the Misseriya had the opportunity to visit the U.S. Embassy for the first time, vent their frustrations, stated that they felt listened to, and left smiling. This, in itself, is very positive and may soften (if even only a little) these embittered leaders in their future meetings with U.S. officials. The leaders do seek tangible results from such a meeting with the Americans: more development assistance, especially water yards and similar livestock assistance, and mediation/reconciliation meetings with the Ngok Dinka. These are not unreasonable demands and they are worthy of support and attention.

TEXT PROVIDED BY MISSEIRIYA INTELLECTUALS

¶11. Begin Text:

"A wrap up of the main points to be discussed with and conveyed to his Excellency the U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Khartoum. Presented by: A group of Misseriya Intellectuals."

¶1. We believe that all of the official solutions provided, so far, to address the Abyei issue, have fallen short of reaching a pragmatic, viable and sustainable settlement of this ticklish issue.

In our opinion, the top down political agenda and concerns of the two stakeholders have surpassed and omitted the legitimate rights and options of the indigenous people and other local communities of the disputed area. Therefore, a solution that stands to reason, whether the Sudan is split into more than one country or not, should be worked out to this problem, well before the 2011 referendum.

¶2. Needless to say, the indigenous people (Misseriya and Dinka Ngok) together with the other local communities of the area, have not been given the opportunity to express themselves and exercise their right to opt for what they believe to be a sustainable solution. In fact, they have been caused to fall prey to a people-for-oil deal, instead of oil-for-people deal. We believe this approach is technically futile and, most likely, will end up in a Kashmir-like dilemma in the region.

¶3. We strongly recommend and stand ready for, a Misseriya Dinka Ngok joint civil society action, to be steered and guided by the

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intellectuals of both sides in a spirit, and with a view of, fostering the longstanding peaceful and brotherly co-existence of the two peoples. For this purpose, we seek Your Excellency's support and goof offices to bring us together with our counterparts from Dinka Ngok, for a heart-to-heart dialogue.

¶4. We consider if of vital importance to note that the current and prospective efforts of the international community, aimed at providing aide to and effecting infrastructural economic and social development in the area, should be carried out fairly and evenhandedly among all of the local communities living therein.

¶5. We call for a brotherly conclusive compromise between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok, in order for the two parties to open up new vistas for a better future of peaceful co-existence and prosperity for their present and upcoming generations. To achieve such a compromise, we need the genuine, unpoliticized support and blessing of both the NCP and SPLM, and of course, we need Your Excellency's good offices and support to bring the two main communities (Misseriya and Dinka Ngok) together for a historical and promising compromise.

END TEXT.

PARTICIPANTS

¶A. Intellectuals (meeting on June 23).

(Name / Clan / Phone):

- Dr. Hassan Mohamed Hamad (Awlad Surur) 0923490558
- Hamadain Abdallah (Awlad Surur) 0122951422
- Dr. Obeidallah Mohamed Obeidallah (Awlad Omran) 0912398674
- Hassan Jifour (Mazaghna) 0912696619
- Dr. Abu al Gasim Gor (Fayareen) 0912282559
- Dr. Mohamed Farah Jibreel (Jubarat) 0912974928
- Nimir Babo Nimir (Awlad Kamil) 0911374111
- Hussein Jibreel al Goni (Ziod) 0912134121
- AlBakheet AlNaïem (Fadliya) 0915074968
- Hyder Babo Nimir (Awlad Kamil) 0123048389

B. Community Leaders (meeting on June 24)

(Name / Clan / Phone):

- Engineer Adam Mohamed Salim (Awlad Surur) 0122050195
- Al-Nazeer Gibreil al Goni (Ziod) 0912697283
- Abdel Rahman Hassan Omer (Mataneen) 0912373178
- Alradhi Balah (Jubarat) 0912149540
- Mahdi Babo Imir (Awlad Kamil) 0912394188
- Abdelrasoul al Nour (Fayareen) 0912354792
- Hamid Osman (Mazaghna) 0122371815
- Yaqoub Abu Algasim (Salamat) 0915446801
- Hassan Subahi (Awlad Omran) 0912145275
- Omda Mohamed Hamad Abdelgalil (Omran) 0129445863
- AlKhair al Faheem (Fayareen) 0912151528
- Ahmed Salih Salouha (Kamil) 0912396468

FERNANDEZ